

September: Suicide Prevention Month

Suicide prevention is our health topic this month. In the US in 2013 more than 41,000 people died by suicide, making suicide the tenth leading cause of death for Americans. A death by suicide occurred every 12.8 minutes.

In the US men kill themselves four times as often as women. Men use firearms or other highly lethal suicide methods. Females make more suicide attempts using medications and other poisons, increasing possibility of saving their lives. Multiple studies have also reported people who identify themselves as LGBT have a higher incidence of suicide attempts.

A recent study revealed that female veterans die by suicide at nearly six times the rate of other women—a rate that approaches that of male veterans. Factors proposed for the increase in suicide rates among female veterans: rape and sexual abuse by fellow service members and increase in use of guns. Also discussed as a factor was whether women at higher risk for suicide disproportionately enter the military. For women ages 18-29, veterans die by suicide at nearly 12 times the rates of nonveterans. In every other age group, including women that served as far back as the 1950's, veteran rates of suicide were between four and eight times higher, showing that causes may extend beyond psychological effects of recent wars.

If you suspect a person or family member may be suicidal, get help immediately. Resources include:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255
Veteran's Crisis Line 1-800-273-8255